

SUBJECT: United Farm Workers et al.

FILE: 44-66143

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : Director,  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
J. Stanley Pottinger  
Assistant Attorney General  
Civil Rights Division

FROM : *SP*  
*bjm*  
Unknown Subjects; Pecos  
County Sheriff's Department;  
Reeves County Sheriff's Department;  
Unknown Victims, United Farm Workers;  
CIVIL RIGHTS

DATE: SEP 3 1975

JSP:FDA:CBM:rs

DJ 144-76-1694

*exp.*  
Reference is made to the attached copy of a letter from [REDACTED] concerning arrests of members of the United Farm Workers union while picketing in Pecos and Reeves County, Texas.

Please conduct the following investigation:

1. Obtain copies of police reports of the arrests in Reeves and Pecos Counties.
2. Determine the status of charges against those arrested in Reeves and Pecos Counties.
3. Interview [REDACTED]
4. Interview three adult persons from among those arrested in Reeves County.
5. Interview three adult persons from among those arrested in Pecos County. Include those three interviews the attorney referred to in [REDACTED] letter

EXP. PROC.  
31 SEP 5 1975

CH 13

REC-85

*Airtel*  
*EP*  
*9/8/75*

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SEP 5 1975

EX 103

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5010-110

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

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6. Identify and interview the law student who allegedly was arrested when she sought to inquire about the charges in Reeves County.

7. Identify and interview the Reeves County surveyor who allegedly made some statement to the effect that the picketing was conducted on public property.

JUL 30 10 22 AM '75  
DEPT. OF JUSTICE

United Farm Workers/AFL-CIO  
P.O. Box 1493  
San Juan, Texas 78589  
(512) 787-5984

July 25, 1975

Edward Levi  
United States Attorney General  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Levi:

We would like to bring to your attention some disturbing events which have taken place near Pecos, Texas in the last three days. We request any assistance you can render to stop the violation of farm workers' rights that is going on there now.

On Wednesday, July 23 United Farm Workers organizers and supporters began picketing near melon fields in Reeves County, Texas. They were picketing peacefully on a public road, trying to inform field workers of the benefits of unionization, when they were arrested. More than thirty people were jailed, including three women and eight children. They were charged with criminal trespass despite the fact that the county surveyor and some of the growers in the area admit the road where picketing took place is public. A law student intern was arrested later that day when she went to the Reeves County jail to inquire about the charges.

The children, ranging in age from twelve to fifteen, were held for five hours in the adult section of the jail before bail could be raised. Nineteen men were forced to remain in jail for two days because no local bondsmen would agree to bond them. During that time the prisoners were denied breakfast in apparent retaliation for their having shouted slogans in support of a field workers' strike.

On Friday, July 25, a picket line was set up on a public road near melon fields in neighboring Pecos County. The picketers were accompanied by an attorney and several law students who hoped by their presence to prevent further arrests. Moments after picketing began all of the UFW supporters on the road, including the lawyer and law students, were arrested. They were given no warning or opportunity to leave to avoid arrest. Fifteen people are again charged with trespass, although their brief activity took place on a public road.

The actions of the Pecos and Reeves County sheriffs are clearly illegal. The sheriffs are using their powers as law officers to stop legitimate labor organizing activities and to interfere with the farm workers' First

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United Farm Workers  
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Amendment rights. They must be called to account for their lawlessness before they succeed in crushing all UFW organizing efforts by their intimidating tactics.

We believe that national attention must be focussed on the developments in Pecos and national pressure must be brought to bear on [REDACTED] so that the law might be observed. We ask your help in achieving these two objectives.

Sincerely yours,  
[REDACTED]

FBI

Transmit in \_\_\_\_\_ Via Airtel  
(Type in plaintext or code)

(Precedence)

TO: SAC, **El Paso (44-883)****9/8/75**

(Date)

From: Director, FBI

65143

**UNSUBS; PECOS  
COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT;  
REEVES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT;  
UNKNOWN VICTIMS, UNITED FARM WORKERS;  
CR**

Reurairtel dated 8/1/75 captioned, "Unknown Members of United Farm Workers Union - Victims; Unsubs, Members of Reeves County, Texas, Sheriff's Office; OO: El Paso, Civil Rights; your file 44-883."

Enclosed are two copies of a self-explanatory Departmental letter dated September 3, 1975 and its enclosure.

Complete the requested investigation in accordance with the provisions of Section 27, Volume II, Manual of Instructions, and surep within 14 days of the receipt of this communication.

State in the first paragraph of the details of your report that it contains the results of a ☒ limited investigation and underscore the word ☒ limited  
☐ preliminary ☐ preliminary

Advise ☒ all persons interviewed  
☒ appropriate officials at the outset that this investigation is being conducted at the specific request of the U. S. Department of Justice.

## Remarks:

**NOTE:** Department requests certain limited investigation based on a complaint concerning picketing by the United Farm Workers. It is alleged that various individuals including children were arrested and detained after they were picketing on what is reported as public property. This instructs El Paso to conduct the requested investigation.

Enc. (4)

(Do not type below this line.)

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SEP 8 1975

FBI

MAIL ROOM ☒TELETYPE UNIT ☐

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Airtel

11/3/75

To: SAC, El Paso (44-883)

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From: Director, FBI

UNSUBS,  
PECOS COUNTY SHERIFF'S  
DEPARTMENT; REEVES COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT;  
UNKNOWN VICTIMS,  
UNITED FARM WORKERS  
CR

Reurep of SA [REDACTED] dated 9/26/75.

Advise status.

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:mlr (4)

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EX-115

REC 12

44-66143-2

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FBI

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